

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 /051 W
-----039517 071358Z /47
P 071346Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO USICA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
SECSTATE WASHDC 0123

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USICA FOR EU

STATE FOR EUR/SOV

LENINGRAD FOR P&C

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OGEN, PROP, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF USIA/ICA REORGANIZATION

1. DURING APRIL 6 CALL ON MFA/PRESS DEPUTY CHIEF V. A. KHAZOV DEVOTED TO OTHER MATTERS, EMBASSY PRESS AND CULTURAL COUNSELOR BENSON, PROMPTED BY ARTICLE THAT SAME MORNING IN "PRAVDA" (BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL), RAISED ISSUE OF RECENT SOVIET PRESS COMMENTARY CRITICAL OF USIA/ICA REORGANIZATION AND SUPPOSED AIMS OF BOTH OLD AND NEW AGENCIES.

2. PREFACING HIS REMARKS BY NOTING THAT MOST RECENT "PRAVDA" SWIPE WAS PARTICULARLY UNFUNNY ATTEMPT AT "HUMOR" WITH SNIDE PERSONAL REFERENCES TO AMBASSADOR REINHARDT, BENSON SAID THAT PARTICULARLY DEPLORABLE WERE REFERENCES TO AGENCY AS FOUNT OF "DISINFORMATION" AND ARM
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OF INTELLIGENCE ORGANS (PRAVDA APRIL 6 PIECE REFERRED TO "EMPLOYEES OF THE CIA SITTING IN USIA"). SOVIETS, SUGGESTED P & C COUNSELOR, SHOULD GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO EFFECT SUCH A PRESS CAMPAIGN CREATES AMONG OFFICIAL U.S. READERSHIP.

3. NOTING THAT THE NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AGENCY

IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE "ENTIRE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF OUR CULTURAL, ACADEMIC, INTELLECTUAL AND INFORMATIONAL EXCHANGES WITH THE WHOLE WORLD", BENSON SAID THAT WE FEEL THIS WORK CONTRIBUTES IN A MAJOR WAY TO BETTERING INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND THAT THE USG, THE ICA AND ICA'S OWN EMPLOYEES TAKE THIS WORK VERY SERIOUSLY. TO BE FACED WITH OPEN ACCUSATIONS IN THE SOVIET PRESS OF "WRONG AND FOUL BEHAVIOR," HE POINTED OUT, IS MOST IRRITATING. COUNTERPOISING "OPEN, HONEST AND WORTHWHILE PURPOSES" OF ICA WITH "NEGATIVE" SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OVER PAST HALF-YEAR, P & C COUNSELOR DEDUCED THAT "HOSTILE CLIMATE IS BEING CREATED ABOUT OUR ACTIVITIES" AND THAT MFA SHOULD LOOK INTO IT AND DRAW APPROPRIATE CONCLUSIONS.

4. KHAZOV REMAINED SILENT THROUGHOUT BENSON'S PRESENTATION, EXCEPT TO INTERJECT AT ONE POINT THAT HE HAD NOT READ THAT MORNING'S "PRAVDA" AND SO HAD NOT SEEN LATEST ARTICLE TO WHICH BENSON WAS REFERRING. WHEN P & C COUNSELOR HAD FINISHED SAYING WHAT HE HAD TO SAY, HE ASKED KHAZOV FOR COMMENT. LATTER'S ENTIRE COMMENT, REPRODUCED HERE WORD-FOR-WORD, WAS "YASNO, YASNO" ("CLEAR, CLEAR"). TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, REORGANIZATIONS, DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW07013
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780150-0847
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780481/aaaacqtw.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 099ad4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3042153
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF USIA/ICA REORGANIZATION
TAGS: OGEN, PROP, SOPN, UR, ICA
To: ICA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/099ad4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014